



The Wesleyan

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FROM THE POETRY CORNER

Janice Walker, though only a Freshman and a brand new personality on these pages, makes a royal debut with three contributions for our poetry section.

In spite of the fact that Janice is the only new poetess presented herein, Tracy Horton, Nancy Harmon, Frances Shumate and Effie Thornton live up to long-standing reputations in their respective verses: *Synthetic Love*, *Walk Proudly*, *Fantasy*, and *The Boy Became a Man*.

* * *

First Place . . .

Not until you've read Elizabeth Jones' *Signed—His Mother*, will you know what truly fine work Wesleyannes can do in the realm of creative writing. Elizabeth is a new name for *The Wesleyan*, but she is by no means a novice when it comes to literary expression. Another "must" is her *Realization* also appearing in this issue.

FOR YOUR

INFORMATION

In The Spring . . .

Candy Adams vows eternal love. But that's before . . . Oh, but we're telling! Read Frances Shumate's entertaining *It's Spring Again* and learn what became of Candy's good intentions.

* * *

Jill is having heart throbs too, but her's are all because of Bob,—as told in clever Harry Edward's latest short story, *Number Please*.

* * *

"—And They Lived Happily" . . .

Veatch the actress has become Veatch the playwright, which further proves the prevailing versatility of Wesleyan girls. Don't miss Sally's charming drama in one act entitled *And We Were Young Again*.

* * *

Remembering . . .

—Our world of yesterday—A world of memories—depicted in the vivid and moving style of Peggy Halliburton.

* * *

Super-Scribler . . .

Margy Ragan who presides over the honorary organization of Wesleyan Scribes is represented by a very short short-story and four poems that range from the most serious vein to the very sad saga of Mad-House Marge.—All of which only goes to prove that Miss Ragan is an extremely talented young lady . . .

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Are We Forgetting (Editorial) -----	4
Signed — His Mother -----	5
Walk Proudly -----	8
Where There's a Will -----	9
Synthetic Love -----	10
Remembering -----	11
Imagination -----	12
Waiting -----	12
Knowing -----	12
Accomplishment -----	12
It's Spring Again -----	13
Number Please? -----	15
The Boy Became a Man -----	18
Fantasy -----	18
Realization -----	19
Goodbye -----	20
Immortality -----	20
And We Were Young Again -----	21
Bitter Sweet -----	27

Are We Forgetting?

"Of course the boys are away doing the actual fighting, but don't think this waiting around, worrying and wondering, isn't just as hard. We are the ones to be pitied," one young college girl was overheard saying to another. She is right in thinking our job, the girl's job, here at home, is terrifically hard, but she is wrong in thinking that our job is to wait, worry, and wonder. Doesn't she know the war is fifty per cent in the boy's hands and fifty per cent in ours?

Exactly what is our part if it is not to wait, worry, and wonder?

First comes the old story of war work, our easiest way to help. The buying of bonds and stamps should never be relaxed. Tired business men and overworked movie stars give unselfishly of their time and energy to back the attack. It takes no time for us—only a step to a table in the Pharm and maybe the sacrifice of one of tomorrow's cokes and hot dogs. A good way to cut the worrying.

The making of surgical dressings is a tangible war work. As you watch the mound of bandages rise, the products of your own two hands, and think how badly they are needed now, how badly they shall be needed when the real invasion starts and the lists of wounded mount to staggering proportions, you know

that you are in there, too. No waiting around here.

However, the job which is ours and ours alone is to keep down the dangerously rising tempo of the times. After every war there is a tendency for morals to relax. In this war laxity of morals is becoming evident in the midst of the war. Nothing could be more detrimental to our society, the society left in our hands by the boys to keep the way they left it until they can come back.

We can't fool ourselves into thinking they will be the same when they return. Thus, the responsibility left in our hands is tremendous. It requires saneness and logic in everything we do, a curbing of emotions, a keeping of rules from little ones to big. The breaking of rules in our Wesleyan community is an indication of the war's effect. We must not let this laxity get a firm hold. By keeping ourselves sane and our environment sane we will be better prepared to help them rebuild their lives. We can't let ourselves wonder how it will be when they are with us again; we can't let them wonder. We must be prepared.

There's so much to be done. By giving of our time, our money, and our sound sense, we must meet the boys half way. Fifty per cent effort can't win our war, can't make the world like they left it.

Signed—His Mother

His small hand felt warm and moist in her palm. The sudden pressure of his fingers was the secret sign between them that he loved her. That was just one of their many secrets. When he winked his left eye, it meant, "Daddy's not really mad, only teasing." When he raised his ridiculous little nose until it looked like a button, he meant, "Just five more minutes, then I'll go to bed."

Helen looked down at his curly golden hair. Perhaps the achy love and fear that blistered her heart crept into that glance, for, as if stung by it, the child lifted his eyes to his mother. They were puzzled,—in a hurt way.

Helen suddenly stooped by his side, despite the crowds on the ship's deck. How could she make it any plainer and clearer? He had to go away—*he just had to*. What choice had she? She pushed these thoughts aside, bit her lip until she fancied she tasted blood.

The pressure of his fingers once again against her palm was the signal she needed to begin speaking. "Ralph," how little he was for such a grown-up name, "you won't be gone long." Her voice quavered. She would not cry—she must not. "You're a big boy, most six, who has the courage of—"

His voice eagerly supplied the words, "All the king's horses and all the king's men."

"How right you are." Helen tried to smile.

His small fingers loosened the grip on her hand, then crept to her chin. "Look, Mother, look what I am doing."

She allowed her chin to be lifted to see his face. A small red tongue was stuck out, curved at the tip, reminding her of an impudent elf.

His eyes were misty with a veil of tears he did not quite understand, but his lips were giving their secret signal—"Let us laugh big, Mother, let us laugh big."

Catching him to her she held him close; fine

cob-web like strands of hair tickled her nose; his rough little coat scratched her cheek; his childish voice whispered in her ear. "You love, me, Mother. You want me to be safe, so you are sending me to America. I do not want to go, *you know*, but I *will*."

How strangely mature his voice sounded, struggling to explain that he understood. Helen felt herself trying to print indelibly on her memory every part of that moment. It would be so long, *maybe never again!* She must remember everything.

"Ralph," how strained her voice was, "wherever you are, be a little gentleman." What meaningless words! "Stay happy, my son."

Groping blindly in her suede bag which Ralph always loved to touch because of its softness, Helen pulled out the card bearing her son's name. With foolish care and tenderness she tried to tie the tag to a small, brown button on Ralph's coat. He stood quite still, hoping in this way to make it easier. Helen wished he would twist and turn so she could laugh and call him "wiggly tail!" Her fingers felt swollen, unable to tie the knot; then suddenly in a seemingly miraculous way it was tied.

"Ralph Lloyd—Age 5—London, England."

From somewhere above them a loud voice, cheerful, cutting the sadness of the moment, shouted, "All ashore who are going ashore."

Helen struggled with a feeling stronger than she had ever known before. It smothered her with its weight. "This is something I can't fight. This is something far greater than I. *This is war.*"

Ralph's head was on her shoulder. Struggling under his weight, she picked him up, not wanting to disturb the feel of his head against her shoulder.

"Shall I tell your father anything?" Strange that she was able to speak.

Ralph raised his head from her shoulder, "Tell him—" (What a big swallow he gave to keep from crying.) "Tell him to be careful driving the ambulance, and tell him I did not cry—much."

The sudden realization that she had to go swept over Helen. Quickly, she forced Ralph from her arms. There he stood, his curly head raised, his mouth trembling, his eyes blinking back the small, shiny tears. *Ralph Lloyd, my son, leaving me to go live with someone else in a strange, unfamiliar place.* Looking wildly about at the people hurrying from the ship, Helen fumbled once again in her bag. It seemed strangely, that everything depended upon finding a pencil and paper. *She had to—she had to!* With an audible, harsh sigh of relief, Helen found a short, stubby brown pencil, marked with tooth prints. The only paper was a piece of Ralph's Humpty Dumpty stationery, crumpled a little and soiled. She didn't know how it had gotten in her bag, but it would do. Swiftly in a handwriting that seemed to quaver slightly Helen wrote. Folding the paper quickly, she put it in Ralph's hand.

"Do not forget this, my son, but give it to the lady who will look after you in America." Shocked at the pleading in her own voice, she heard herself begging, "Do not lose it, *please* do not lose it. It is so very important — so very."

Someone had her by the arm. "Madame, you *must* go."

Helen blindly kissed the blurring round face then turned and ran.

Ralph's eyes searched for her on the pier. He could not find her. He lowered his head to hide his tears from the nurse who was approaching him. Crumpled in his fingers he saw the note. "This is important. *Must not lose it—I must not lose it.*" Carefully he tucked the piece of paper in the pocket of his coat. Stifling a sob, he put his soft hand into the rough palm of the nurse now by his side. Unconsciously he squeezed it, then suddenly he realized this woman did not know. Sniffling, he whispered, "Only my mother understands."

II

It was a rambling sort of house, sprawled out comfortably in the shade of several large trees. Julia often thought of it as a large collie dog, sleeping under bushes, ignoring the world. It had been built just enough years ago to make it look weather beaten in an interesting sort of way. Today, looking at it from the road, Julia felt as if the house were yawning, waking up. She could not explain why she felt this way. Maybe the little boy by her side in the car was the reason. The house had always needed a child. Julia thought it was queer that fate had decided she and Bill would never have a baby. She felt almost happy, however, knowing she was going to share her home with this peculiarly silent boy.

Ralph's eyes were searching the view before him. He was a little puzzled over the house, *but he liked it.* He liked the lady beside him too. As if reproaching himself for the thought, he said timidly, "You're nice, but I love my mother more."

Julia was startled by the words. She hesitated a moment before speaking. Had she forgotten the child had a mother? Julia realized she had for the moment. She had only thought of this boy as suddenly belonging to *her*. Her mind had only been filled with plans for him, plans to make him love her. Then the smooth melody of her thoughts had been broken into by the unexpected mention of his mother. Almost impatiently she pushed that dim figure aside.

"I'm your mother now. Before long you will love me just as much, if not more."

Ralph eyed Julia doubtfully as she lifted him from the car. Slowly, he followed her up the steps, into the house. Inside his mind he was pondering the idea of loving Julia as much as his mother. It would be impossible. Why Julia did not even understand what he meant when he stuck out his tongue in an elfish point. Of course, he could tell her that it was a signal to laugh, but that was their secret, *his and his mother's.*

Julia was now leading him up the stairs. It was odd how devoted she felt to the child when

she had only known him for a few days. Inside her heart she felt a fierce resentment growing toward his mother—whom he loved. Gripping the bannister she determined within herself, "I can make him forget. He will forget quickly, for he is so young. I will call him Bill—Bill Jr., just like he were *mine*."

Pushing open a small, white door, Julia caught Ralph in her arms, carrying him into the room. "This is yours, darling."

Bewildered, Ralph looked about him. The floor was covered with a soft, white run painted with large pictures of *Pinochio* with a long nose. The bed was white too, built to the wall with little steps leading up. Everything was funny; Ralph laughed.

Julia felt warm inside. "He likes it."

Stooping to the floor she picked up a large Mother Goose book with the cow jumping over the moon on the front. Ralph squatted by her side, fascinated by the bright pictures: Mary, Mary Quite Contrary in a beautiful yellow dress—Lucy Locket crying great big tears because she had lost her pocket—Thin Jack Sprat dressed in a green suit—*Humpty Dumpty*??? Julia tried to turn the page.

Humpty Dumpty — H u m p t y D u m p t y! Ralph held the page in his tight little fingers, a queer expression on his face. The name stumbled about in his child like mind, trying to remind him of something. *What? H u m p t y D u m p t y* in a green suit!

Suddenly he knew. "Do not lose it, my son, it is so very important, so very." Jumping to his feet, Ralph fumbled in his pocket. *The note!* Where was it?

Julia watched him, wondering. He looked too earnest, his little brow puckered, his lower lip caught between his teeth. Suddenly, she did

not want him to find what he was searching for. It seemed so important it frightened her.

It was too late. With a triumphant gesture Ralph pulled a small, crushed wad of paper from his pocket. As if knowing he had completed an important mission successfully, he handed Julia the paper, saying proudly, "From my mother."

Julia shuddered unconsciously, feeling the grip of someone stronger than herself. She started to toss the note aside unread, but Ralph's eyes were fastened upon her. Slowly she unfolded the soiled paper. There at the top was a *Humpty Dumpty* with a cracked head. Julia hesitated, afraid to read. She looked once again at Ralph claiming him as her own. "You are *mine* now."

With this she let her eyes fall on the handwriting with the unaccustomed quaver. Her hands trembled, for the brief message written there seemed to shout at her. Slowly needles of guilt pricked at her heart, drawing tears to her eyes.

Tenderly she lifted Ralph to her lap whispering, "Tell me all about her—your mother I mean."

Julia watched his face grow radiant. "We had so many secrets, Mother and I. I cannot tell you those, but she—she smelled like violets, and she had a soft, soft pocket book—and—and"

Julia held him closer, urging him to go on, though every word cut at her heart. In her hand she felt the wad of paper pressed hard against her flesh, crushing into her very body the simple message, "*Don't let him forget me,*" signed "*His mother.*"

—ELIZABETH JONES

WALK PROUDLY

*Walk proudly, youth,
The world is yours
With all the glorious, gleaming wealth of ages
past,
Yours the purple velvet of new strength and
power,
Yours for this hour, pure beauty and
In Chaos, courage with a scarlet plume.*

*Walk proudly, youth.
The ecstatic joy of morning breaks your heart,
Beneath the noontide breath of love your eye
lids droop,
Your lonely soul is drowned in midnight tears,
But with the dawn, no fears,
The old sweet rapture floods again.*

*Walk proudly, youth
The world is yours,
Life's glowing torch lies in your hands,
Yours is the song, the dream, the golden spell,
Yours too, the knell of death; darkness, flames
—no more,
The hell of war, your heritage.*

*Walk proudly, youth
Yours is—this day.*

—NANCY HARMON

Where There's A Will

*Beauty stands in front of a mirror and satisfies her vanity. Wit seeks an audience and renews a shrinking ego—
But what is left for a lonely heart?*

Jody stared dismally at her rough hands, reddened from washing dishes. She cursed the servant problem, the war, the whole world. It was not fair to have to spend her summer vacation doing housework—and—and where were all those summer romances her mother reminisced about?

All the girls in Jody's crowd were attractive—really on the beam—but they were getting a little tired of looking at each other. There would be no men in the picture unless they had "contacts" and no lady-lake way had yet been worked out in which to establish them.

Jody slipped her slim body out of the door into the back yard and strolled around in the carefree manner of a caged tiger. She passed by the empty servant's house—grim reminder of the awful state of affairs in their vacant kitchen. As Jody paused to shake her fist at the little frame house a thought came. If no servants were to be had, why not capitalize on this available space by fixing it up and renting it out? Jody's creative instinct was beating a fast new tempo. With all this spare time she could do the work herself and take her mind off her loneliness.

Nothing could turn Jody from her path once it was chosen. She knew all about painting—well at least she had watched painters at work on their house and it looked like such a simple job for those big men. Later on, immersed in her sticky mixture, she began to see things in a different light. Her back was aching and she was covered with pale blue from head to heel.

If someone had just been kind enough to explain to her about how long these things took, she wouldn't have been so optimistic and run

that add in the paper—"Nice single room and bath for rent—apply 11 North Court"—Now, in the process of wiping paint from her hands to the sides of her pink overalls, she looked up to see a prospective tenant paused at the door. He was short, red-headed, and wore horn rimmed glasses—and he was indeed eager for living quarters. This place showed great possibilities. He would pay \$60 per month if the young lady considered that adequate charges?

Jody gasped in amazement, subtly of course. She had never dreamed of such a fee. "Well, sir," she said in her most official tone, "You are—er, that is—the place has already been rented to that young man coming up the walk!"

The mite-sized man sighed his regrets and turned to go. Jody stood gazing through the door with glazed eyes. The mite-sized man walked in the line of her gaze, then stopped where it stopped—to pluck at the arm of a handsome brawney navy flier.

"I say, sir," Mr. Mite ventured timidly, "you are certainly lucky to have this charming room. I had rather hoped to find here a place to live."

The blond dream looked surprised and exploded, "Why, I don't—" He looked up for one blinding moment into Jody's eyes, "Well, that is—I don't see why you can't share it with me if you like!"

Mr. Mite left in joy to fetch his bags. Mr. Muscles gazed happily at his landlady. Jody made a new contact in the most lady-like way.

Who would have imagined finding romance in a back yard! Could you?

—MARGY RAGAN

SYNTHETIC LOVE

*I tied my love in packages
And sealed them with discretion;
In each was placed a little warmth,
A little heart expression.*

* * *

*Each bundle was a measured thing,
It's wrapping sure and cool . . .
The bows were tied with deft good taste,
No frivols of a fool!*

* * *

*Then you appeared, a homely guy
With little Abner's stubborn mop,
A devilish grin . . . and silly words
That made my pulses stop.*

* * *

*You loped your way right to my heart,
And though I prayed, "come in,"
My candor wouldn't let me say it—
What I felt within.*

* * *

*You shook your head and walked away,
Believed I didn't care . . .
My packages of love were safe—
My heart was cold and bare.*

* * *

*The other day I took a peep
And saw through tears my foolish store
Of misered love in measured boxes
Stacked upon the floor.*

* * *

*I tried to keep my head that day,
But could no longer fight your charms,
I grabbed my gifts in one great heap,
And flung them in your arms.*

—TRACY HORTON

Remembering

I am remembering a college world of two years ago—a world of youth and fun and laughter and very few tears. It was a world untouched by war. Our city of Macon was just taking on the tones of a metropolis, for an Army camp had been built somewhere outside the town, an airfield was growing a few miles away in another direction, and a few uniforms were appearing on the downtown streets. Wesleyan stood unperturbed, six miles from the city limits. Mercer boys, Tech boys, Georgia boys, boys from every nearby school thronged the campus. They were laughing boys with jalopies, with convertibles, with their dad's old sedan; they wore rough tweeds, sport shirts, purple ties, saddle oxfords, gabardine raincoats and hats. An occasional uniform turned up on the campus; not many girls found the thought of a strange uniform appealing, or the fact that the uniform might belong to a Yankee.

That world was one of extravagance; elegant college wardrobes, rich meals in the dining room with an accounted number of many guests attending, long playtime hours, an extravagant use of time that could have been spent in study or some useful project. It was a time of week-ends spent off at some college house-party, some fraternity dance, or a big home-town social event. There were days and nights of singing fraternity songs, of riding endless miles for the joy of it, of tearing around a corner on one wheel with tires screeching helplessly.

Those were the days of '41 when large allowances were spent on luxuries, when the word

"save" meant nothing, for tomorrow was coming, and with it would come more money, if it was needed. And how to spend the summer? Oh—on the beach—or in some big city—or visiting relatives—just loafing—so very tired after my strenuous school year. Go to summer school? Deliver me from that! Just bookworms go to summer school—and goodness knows, I'm tired of studying! Did you know that Jane is going to WORK this summer? Imagine—as if she needed to! Summer was a playtime thing. People who worked when they didn't have to were old fogies.

The only worry of the college crowd was the fact that some of the best beaux attended schools as far away as North Carolina. That was a terrible blow. And if one didn't have a formal for at least every three dances, it was a catastrophe. Some brave girls even managed to stand up under the shock of having to wear a plain purple orchid, instead of a white one. It wasn't a very seriously troubled college world.

You see, we thought we had all the time we needed. We could afford to waste it. We had all our life spread before us, with plenty of everything we wanted, be it living, or laughing, or loving. We had seen the World's Fair in New York with its World of Tomorrow. That told us how simple everything would be. We thought we would be living in that clearcut peaceful World of Tomorrow. We didn't know very much them.

We know now.

—PEGGY HALIBURTON

IMAGINATION

*Imagination often drapes one in purple—
It sometimes sprinkles diamonds round,
And brings soft music, or the tingling strains—
But my imagination takes me home again.*

—JANICE WALKER

WAITING

*Are you waiting consciously—
Or do you pass the time?
Do you think about your plight
And fill the hours with loneliness
Or do you keep your soul shining
And polish your mind anew
With work and plans for future days?*
—MARGY RAGAN

KNOWING

*Though a face may be a perfect blank
To hide an inner feeling,
The eyes are deep radiant wells
Where reflection is revealing.*

—MARGY RAGAN

ACCOMPLISHMENT

Far off there is a plain; it's very high.
—JANICE WALKER

It's Spring Again

Candy Adams smiled mournfully but with determination at her image in the small mirror above her ruffled vanity table.

"—and I'll never fall in love again!!"

Her statement was simple and concise with the worldly experience of seventeen years behind it.

"Rod—dearest Rod was my first and—," she paused to reassure herself,"—and my last love! I'll be true to him forever!"

So—there it was—Within barely three seconds Candy had sworn eternal love and devotion to Rod Ingram, a most handsome lieutenant in the Army air corps. Really—their brief but exciting courtship had been most romantic. From picnics in the summer to dances in the winter Rod had been so sweet and gay and thoughtful. Romeo and Juliet were an old fashioned flame compared with Rod and Candy. They went Shakespeare one better—they were going to have a happy ending! Nothing would ever come between them to dim their romance.

"I'll never—," Candy made the supreme sacrifice, "never date another man!"

Down stairs Candy heard the door opened and slammed shut. Candy wasn't interested. Probably the mail man anyhow. There was some commotion and Candy heard a husky voice—it was a man! Carefully she suppressed her first savage desire to see who it was.

"No," she quoted herself. "It's just a man—not Rod."

The door to Candy's room was flung open and in rushed her best pal, bosom buddy, and confidant—Patsy Davis.

"Hi, Candy," Patsy was all energy and twice as enthusiastic.

"Now what?" her friend's cool manner should have warned Patsy.

"Honey, it's a man—and he's all yours!!"

Clasping her hands in a gesture she remembered from Joan Fontaine's *Jane Eyre* (produced by M. G. M. with Orson Wells) Candy smiled sweetly at Patsy.

"But, dear," the tone one uses to an idiot boy, "I don't want him."

Patsy sank unsteadily to the chaise lounge.

"I'm—I'm astounded," Patsy gasped. "It's a man—but—but," she stammered, "you don't want him."

Again Candy smiled too, too sweetly. "Have you forgotten Rod?"

"But—but he's gone. Just like my Frank. Remember? They left the same day!"

"A-hh, yes." This time Candy spoke à la Bette Davis. "Rod is gone—but not forgotten! I—we've pledged eternal love! To last forever and ever!"

"Ye holy catfish!!" Patsy whispered.

Then, quickly remembering herself she launched into her favorite argument in cases of eternal love. "Yes, and he's a million miles away too!"

"He's forever in my heart."

Patsy gulped and almost choked. She'd never seen Candy like this before. It wasn't natural for a seventeen year old, much less Candy Adams, to limit her field of interest to one lone male.

"He's handsome, Candy," she began coaxingly, "and he's got a car."

"Today's the first day of Spring. Such a lovely day to be in love."

Patsy shuddered. This was getting serious!

"It's a '42 model Buick—and the top lets

down."

From a great distance Candy remarked, "When Rod comes back—after the war—we'll—"

Desperately Patsy broke in. "His name is Evans Harding. He's from New York."

It may have been imagination but Patsy thought Candy's shoulders shifted a bit. It was a good sign.

"It's up to us to help army morale—only Evans is in the navy—an ensign!"

Candy spoke with longing. "Someday Rod may be a general."

"Evans will be stationed here three months," she paused, "—he thinks."

"That," Candy conceded, "is a long time."

"You know they've opened that new place near the Log Cabin," she hesitated. "Gosh, I'll bet it's a super-duper dream. It's called The Hangar—Exciting name, isn't it?"

"Some people may go there but—," Candy was bored—or at least she had a good act.

Patsy struggled for a casual tone. "I heard that Norma Phillips'd been out already."

It worked! The mention of Candy's arch rival in Greenwood's younger set had broken down the barrier of Candy's indifference.

Patsy took charge.

"We'd have such delicious times—you and Evans and Charles and I. Just the four of us. I'm sure they'd send flowers."

Patsy paused for effect. The room was too quiet. Candy was deeply engrossed in counting the daffodils that were arranged in the vase on her desk.

"The very least you can do, Candy, is to come look at him! Umm, there is definitely something about a navy uniform that—that—, well, the army simply hasn't got it."

The room was still quiet. Suddenly Patsy smiled. She decided to try her last but most effective trick.

"Oh, well," she began walking toward the door, "if you aren't interested—."

Candy began brushing her hair slowly.

"Some other time, maybe?" Patsy turned the door knob.

"Now, Patsy," Candy's voice was brisk and business-like, one-friend-to-another tone, "you mustn't get the idea that I'm being disloyal to—to Rod."

Patsy jumped at the clue. "I know, I know. I know just how you feel. And you *aren't* being disloyal to Rod. Why, he'd *want* you to have a good time—to go out."

"Oh, I'm not going out!" Candy was shocked. "I'm just going down to look at — at Evans."

Patsy tried to hide her smile of triumph as she followed Candy down the stairs and into the parlor where Evans Harding was waiting.

And so—the evening went — dining and dancing at the Hotel Royal, a ride over the fresh, new fallen snow to The Hangar, and getting there just in time to have the last few dances before they closed for the night. It had been a wonderful evening — and Patsy had come to spend the rest of the night with Candy.

"They said they'd call us in the morning," Patsy sighed hopefully. "Maybe tomorrow night—."

"You know," Candy yawned, "it's Spring—and—and I'm in love! Isn't Evans perfectly charming?!"

Patsy grinned impishly. Everything was wonderful — Spring had come again — and Candy was in love *again!*

—FRANCES SHUMATE

Number Please?

"I wish there wasn't such a thing as a man in this world," thought Jill, and she punctuated her thoughts by plugging in connections on the switchboard before her with an extra little venomous push. Then with characteristic honesty she thought, "No, that's not right, Jill. You wish you were pretty—or attractive—or whatever it is that makes men sit up and take notice." She glanced over at Dolly, working away beside her. "What is it about Dolly? The pseudo-blonde, upswept-hair-do? I might try peroxidizing my hair, too." Her sense of humor made her grin to herself at the thought. "Is it the drooping mouth painted that startling red? No, I tried that too." (She'd eaten saurkraut and wieners at lunchtime for three days to make up for that two dollar Helena Rubenstein lipstick.) "I Dare You Red" it was called. "Well, nobody took the dare," she thought, pushing a brown soft curl out of her eyes. She could never do anything with her hair. It was like baby silk, her dad used to say.

NUMBER PLEASE? THANK YOU.

"Today I'm worse than usual," she thought. "It's just that every single soul that works in this hotel is going to the party except—"

As if reading Jill's mind, Dolly looked over and said, "You really ought to come to this blow-out tonight, kid. It's not every day The Boss gives us the works like this, with an orchestra and eats and everything." NUMBER PLEASE? THANK YOU. ("Funny, I always feel like I wanna' pat her on the head, or somethin'," Dolly thought. "She's so lonesome and helpless, somehow. Poor kid. All she needs is a little pushin'. She's not so bad lookin'—she's got a cute shape, and nice eyes when she smiles." NUMBER PLEASE? S O R R Y, THE LINE'S BUSY.

"Look, kid," she said out loud, "I know a

guy who'd just love to come and bring you"—(it wouldn't hurt Johnny to do it just this once.)

"Oh, I don't want to go with one of *your* men, thank you, though, Dolly. I just don't know what to say to people like that. I've never known . . ." (Back in Medville it was always Susan who took over the conversation—gay, lively, blonde Susan. "Strange how two sisters can be so different, isn't it?" she had heard people say.)

"For heaven's sake, kid, it's so simple. You just let *them* do the talking," Dolly said, as she plugged in a connection. STANTON HOTEL? THANK YO'. She glanced over her shoulder, and her eyes widened. "Here's a slick chance, kid! If you just wouldn't be such a shrinkin' violet." She began to hum loudly.

Jill looked up and had to swallow her heart as a tall, sun-tanned soldier on crutches made his way slowly across the lobby, holding his bandaged left foot a few inches off the floor.

"Somebody's winged him, kid, he *can't* get away!" Dolly chuckled to herself over her joke.

"Lord, Dolly—" STANTON HOTEL? ONE MOMENT, PLEASE. "Oh, Dolly, that's Bob Carey! He visited Medville summer before last. He had a few dates with my sister, but she had so many other guys she didn't pay him much attention, and he soon gave up. But I thought he was wonderful. He never looked past Susan to see me, though—He wouldn't remember."

The soldier limped over to the switchboard counter and attempted to balance himself while he looked up a number in the big, cumbersome directory. Losing his balance, he steadied himself quickly against the rail, knocking off the directory in his haste. Jill jumped up hurried-

ly, and picked up the book, saying with unconscious sympathy.

"Oh, let me help you!" She backed up, blushing in confusion. "I mean, could—do you want me to find a number for you?"

"Why, yes, thanks." Grinning, he looked down at her, and indicated the crutches, "I'm not used to these things yet. I was trying to find the number of the Career Girls' Club.

Dolly, ignoring the half dozen little lights winking impatiently for service, and craning her neck with obvious interest in the little scene, turned back to her work with a sigh when she heard the name Girls' Club. ("No sale," she thought, disgustedly.) STANTON HOTEL? ONE MOMENT, PLE-UZ.

Jill's plump little hands turned the pages with nervous haste. Finding the number, she went back to her chair and spoke into the mouthpiece. RIDGEWOOD 7303. Looking up with a shy smile she said, "Here's your party, sir."

"Thanks." He picked up the phone at the counter and spoke eagerly. "I want to speak with Marie Stafford, please." There is a pause. "Marie Stafford. She *doesn't*? But she's *got* to be there. I *know* she lives there! She doesn't?" his voice dropped disappointedly. "Oh."

Dolly looked up and winked at Jill hopefully.

("Oh, stop it, Dolly!" Jill thought, "don't encourage my crazy ideas!")

"Did she leave any forwarding address?" Bob was saying. "Just a minute . . ." He tried to write the address down with one hand, but the paper kept slipping around. Jill quietly took the pencil from him and wrote down the address as he repeated it. "McCormick Brothers? 321 Wesley Street. Thank You." He turned to Jill, "If you would be so kind — I hate to impose on you, but would you look up that number for me?"

Jill said shyly, "Yes, certainly." (Why don't you say you're Susan's sister, Jill? Are you scared to remind him? She thought?)

"Say, soldier," Dolly said conversationally, "you just get in town?" NUMBER PLE-UZ? THANK YO'.

"Just this morning," he answered. "I've been in Africa and Italy, and boy it sure feels wonderful to be home! Well, not home, exactly."

"The number is Murraydale 2501. I'll ring it for you." MURRAYDALE 2501.

He picked up the phone and waited eagerly. "Hello, does Marie Stafford work there? May I speak to her, please?" His face fell. "She's not there today?"

("Boy, this Marie must have plenty on the ball," Dolly thought.)

"Do you know where I can find her? Oh, I see. Well, when he isn't busy, please ask him to call Sergeant Bob Carey at—" he looked at Jill to tell him the number.

"Walnut 8700," she supplied.

"Walnut 8700," he repeated. "Thank you."

Putting the phone back in its place, he said dejectedly, "Well, I give up. You've been so darn good to help me, but it looks like a hopeless case. She isn't in, and her boss, who knows where she lives, is in conference."

"Maybe you'll have some message from him in a few minutes." NUMBER PLEASE? I'M SORRY, THE LINE'S BUSY. "But you look so tired," in her concern she forgot her shyness. "Why don't you go get a cup of coffee? There's a shop out that door on the right and up the hall. I'll take any message that comes in for you."

Bob looked at her gratefully, "I do feel sorta' weak—just been out of the hospital a few days."

"Yeah, you go get a cup of coffee," Dolly put in, "we'll take care of any message." WHAT NUMBER PLE-UZ? THANK YO'. She hardly waited for him to hobble out of hearing distance before she burst out, "If you'd stop bein' so darn helpful, maybe he wouldn't find that girl. And I'll bet a dollar he'd go with you to the party tonight. He doesn't seem to know anyone else around." STANTON

HOTEL? ONE MOMENT, PLE-UZ! Then softening a little she said, "You kinda' like him, doncha', kid?"

"I—oh, Dolly, have you ever seen such *blue* eyes? NUMBER PLEASE? THANK YOU. But even if he didn't find that girl he wouldn't go with me. I wouldn't ask him either — I wouldn't know what to say. Now if I were as attractive—"

"Oh, cut it, kid," Dolly said. "You'll never get anywhere like that. You've got to think you're super special, or nobody else will."

A red light flashed on and Jill plugged in a connection. STANTON HOTEL? OH, NO, HE ISN'T HERE RIGHT NOW. BUT HE LEFT A MESSAGE. HE WANTS TO KNOW IF YOU HAVE A GIRL WORKING THERE NAMED MARIE STAFFORD. YOU HAVE? OH. SHE ISN'T? I SEE. AND COULD WE REACH HER BY TELEPHONE? THANK YOU. YES. THANK YOU. GOODBYE. "Oh, Dolly," she moaned, "he *knew* where she lives! Here's her number!"

"If I was you, kid, I'd tear that number up and forget about it. That soldier's lonesome. I can tell." NUMBER PLE-UZ? THANK YOU. "If he doesn't find that girl you're set. Take it from me."

"Oh, I couldn't, Dolly! He'd be so disappointed. But wouldn't it be wonderful!" Excitement bubbled up inside her. ("Be careful, Jill, she thought.") "I wouldn't care if he couldn't dance. He's so tall! And I could wear my blue dress — my new blue one. But — it wouldn't be right—be—"

"Don't be a fool, Jill," Dolly said. "That girl probably doesn't mean anything to him really—and you don't want to miss the party."

("Why not," Jill thought, "I want to so badly — there might be a chance—") "Oh, Dolly, I'll do it! I'll tell him the man doesn't

know where she lives—that—" she stopped suddenly as she looked up and saw Bob swinging himself across the lobby with surprising speed.

"Have you had any message?" he asked eagerly. "Has he called?"

"No—that is I—" Jill hesitated, looked at Dolly pleadingly, then took a deep breath and faced Bob squarely. "Yes—he did call. ("Here goes your heart Jill.") He said that Miss Stafford was at home with her mother who is ill. And he gave me this number — Hemlock 2343." She looked down quickly the despair she knew was in her eyes.

"Oh, thank God for that!" His exultation trampled on her heart. "Please get me the number!"

HEMLOCK 2343, she busied herself with calls that were not even there. NUMBER PLEASE? THE LINE'S BUSY.

He picked up the phone and after a moment said triumphantly, "Hello, Marie? Lord, what a time I've had finding you! This is Bob—Bob Carey. When? Oh, just yesterday. They flew me back in one of those hospital ships—a good trip." His tone changed and his voice became husky, "Marie — about Joe — I — his last thoughts were about you and that kid of his he never saw. I have his watch and his ring and a letter he wrote. I promised him I'd give them to you myself. Oh, no, don't do that. I can come out this afternoon and bring them to you." He took a deep breath to steady himself. "No, Marie, thank you. Since your Mother is sick, I won't stay for supper. But I'll see you in an hour, then. Goodbye, Marie."

He put down the phone for a moment, looking intently at nothing. Then he turned and looked straight at Jill. "Would you consider having dinner with a lonesome soldier tonight?" he said.

—HARRY EDWARDS

THE BOY BECAME A MAN

*He was a boy—
 Young, gay, carefree,
 Through hopeful eyes;
 He thought that
 His future was what
 He chose to make of it.
 He faced life with a
 Recklessness, which seemed
 Closely akin to defiance.*

*Then he went away
 To all the horrors of
 A long and bloody war.
 There he realized his need of
 Something which is far
 Stronger than any mortal;
 Belief in The Supreme Being.
 His defiance changed to faith;
 His recklessness to courage—
 The boy became a man.*

—EFFIE THORNTON

FANTASY

*The moon . . .
 A silvered eyebrow
 On the mask of night
 Questioning the ways of this other world.*

*The cloud . . .
 A chiffon scarf
 Over the shoulder of night
 Flaunting its freedom to the wind.*

*The star . . .
 A sequined beauty mark
 On the cheek of night
 Accenting the softness of heaven's charm.*

—FRANCES SHUMATE

Realization

Suddenly there it was as clear as the sun shining on the field across the road, and I wondered how I could ever have doubted it. I wasn't doing anything, just sitting thinking those queer, little mixed thoughts that come in moments of idleness. The wind blew high in the tree tops, and I listened to the soft music it made among the leaves. The sun sifted through the greenness and laid patterns of brightness on the soft, warm earth. I remember I heard a plane, and as I looked up, plane and sound were lost and muffled in the soft white and blue of a July sky.

Then it was clear, and I knew. What happened? Who can say! All I know is this—that strong arms of certainty lifted me softly and unexpectedly out of doubt and confusion, and I suddenly wanted to laugh for denying it so long. Why, in denying this I have denied the sunshine that has often beaten upon us with its realness as we have walked together! I have denied the rain falling solid and cutting on our faces. I have denied the lightning that has blinded us and the thunder that has shaken our very beings. I have denied life itself.

It was as if I had been walking in a tangled jungle and suddenly felt myself, free of the twisted vines about me, placed magically on a white beach with the clear, blue sea wide and endless before me.

I felt like looking up and telling the trees, but the leaves laughed as if they already knew, and I wondered strangely if I was the last one to learn.

I tried to think what this new feeling was like—perhaps like being a smooth, white stone lying hot and dry on the bank of a stream, watching the water rush by, listening to its bubbling music, yet not a part of it; then being

lifted lightly by an unseen, unexpected hand and tossed gently, yet firmly into the center of the swift water. I was the smooth, hot, dry stone. I felt the cool, refreshing water rush over me, felt it close on me until the dancing sound of the water was all about me, and I was now a part of its bubbling music.

And then I was a child again, a child who had just discovered for the first time that a butterfly had emerged from the gray cocoon on the apple tree in the orchard. I wanted to run and find *you* and tell you what I had just come upon. I felt foolishly like skipping barefooted over the country road with the sun in my face and eyes, with the wind blowing in my hair, with the sand tickling my toes, and the hotness of the rough earth urging my feet forward. It was somehow as if you were just over the hill, sitting on our rock waiting for me to run up, tired and breathless, to tell you my secret, my secret that perhaps you have known for so long.

I never thought it would happen this way with your eyes, your voice, your smile so far away. Perhaps that is what makes it so right, so certain. I did not hear the urgency of your voice, nor see the unspoken words in your eyes, nor feel your hand warm and reassuring in my own. I was alone on a summer afternoon with the sun in gay bright splotches all about me, with the breeze blowing my hair in my eyes, with the leaves talking among themselves, and the sound of a distant plane high above me in the blue. *I was alone. I was not even thinking of you*, and suddenly there it was as clear as the sun shining on the field across the road, and I wondered how I could ever have doubted that I love you.

—ELIZABETH JONES

GOODBYE

*A match touches the soul, untold thoughts
spring free . . . to a soul . . . and thoughts
exchange between two, never old, but al-
ways new . . . and love comes bubbling,
rising through, the kind of love that's
warmed by interlocking cogitations . . .
and the walking of two spirits through a
valley of lights and shadows.*

*All is crushed by sad adieu, it cannot be but
sad . . . the soul has gone to mix with
others . . . all of much more vivid colors.
No, even the spirit cannot stay with thine.
To ones much greater it is destined.
"Goodbye" is past and though you reach
for one more word, the candle shines no
more.*

—JANICE WALKER

IMMORTALITY

*What could be behind that door
That holds the crowds attention?
Could it be a pleasant thing—
Or something we don't mention?*

*The lock has a combination
By which the latch swings free.
And millions try to find it—
The key is Christianity.*

*Some people work day and night;
Others try spasmodically;
But all have the strongest hope
In finding immortality.*

—MARGY RAGAN

And We Were Young Again

Characters: Charlotte Barry, 29, a Broadway actress.

Carol Newbern, 35, her friend and wife of her leading man.

David Sanders, 30, journalist.

Time: Late afternoon of a cold spring day in the present year.

Place: A hilltop on a secluded part of a college campus in a small American town. Paths go off stage right and left. Trees, flowers, and the usual bench for campus couples are the only scenery.

As the curtain rises Charlotte and Carol enter from stage right. Both are slightly out of breath from hurrying up the hill. Charlotte speaks as she enters.

Charlotte: Oh, hurry, Carol! Hurry!

Carol: Charlotte, do you . . . do you have to dash around like this? I . . . I realize that you are somewhat excited over seeing your dear old Alma Mater again but after all, my dear! Do you have to *run* up a hill like that? We're not exactly spring chickens any longer! Thank heaven the place at least has a bench! [*She sinks on the bench exhausted.*]

Charlotte: Oh . . . Oh, this is . . . this is the place! This is the very spot!

Carol: What spot?

Charlotte: [*Not hearing*] And it's . . . it's still the same—the . . . the bench . . . the path to the town road and . . . and that one back to the campus! Oh, it's been so awfully, terribly long since I've seen it!

Carol: How long has it been?

Charlotte: Ten years . . . and it seems like twenty! Oh, I thought the day would never come! Oh, Carol, isn't this the most heavenly place?

Carol: Well, really, Charlotte, my dear, I suppose it means a lot to you but without the memories attached it's really . . . er . . . really quite an ordinary-looking college campus.

Charlotte: I . . . I suppose you're right, but it will never be ordinary to me. It's . . . It's too full of memories. Too many beautiful things have happened here.

Carol: Such as?

Charlotte: Oh, you know. Those lovely, romantic things that happen to you only when you're young . . . young and in love. But all of that was so long ago. It's . . . It's too bad we can't be young again . . .

Carol: I think I'd better take you away from this place. In the next few minutes you'll be crying on my shoulder and longing for those "dear dead days of long ago."

[*Both laugh and then Charlotte is suddenly serious.*]

Charlotte: I might be at that . . . but you know, Carol, I'm not nearly as interested in seeing the college and town as I thought I'd be. They have faded too far back in my memory to be very important.

Carol: Then why on earth did you come?

Charlotte: Why? I came just to climb this hill!

Carol: Just to climb a hill? . . . Well for . . .

Charlotte: Just to climb up here again and

to . . . to remember an awful struggle I had with myself one day.

Carol: I thought there would be something dramatic or unusual about it, but now that you've seen the place again let's get back to the car . . . Vance and Jim will be getting impatient.

Charlotte: Oh, let them wait a few minutes . . . I must wait a little longer. I'd like to . . . to tell you about it, Carol . . . I . . . I have to tell the whole story to somebody.

Carol: The story? My heavens, Charlotte, is this quite the time or place for story telling? Can't you wait until we get back to the car? I'm getting quite chilly up here.

Charlotte: No! That won't do! I can't let Vance know. He wouldn't understand.

Carol: Vance not understand? What is this? [*Jokingly*] Are you keeping something from your fiancé?

Charlotte: Vance is not my fiancé!!

Carol: No, but you know very well he would be in a moment's notice if you'd come to your senses and say yes.

Charlotte: Oh, I probably will, but I couldn't decide until I had come up here today . . . I couldn't!

Carol: And that's another thing . . . you've put off Vance for two years with your work as an excuse, and now for the last few months you've used this trip as another delay. You're going to wake up some day and find yourself without even Vance around.

Charlotte: Oh I know, I know . . . I haven't been fair to him but I . . . I just had to wait until today.

Carol: Why, for heaven's sake?

Charlotte: That's all part of the story.

Carol: Well, you've certainly aroused my curiosity, but I'm afraid we'll have to save it until tonight. Don't you realize, Charlotte, that it is getting late? And quite chilly?

Charlotte: I know . . . but . . .

Carol: You'll have a sore throat after five minutes more of standing out here in this cold air? And then where would you be?

Charlotte: Oh, Carol, I . . .

Carol: Surely all the excitement hasn't made you forget that you are starring in a play to-

night, has it?

Charlotte: No, of course not! But don't you see . . .

Carol: And you must be at your very best. The whole countryside will be out to see you. They'll all manage to remember having known you when you went to college here.

Charlotte: Yes, I suppose they will.

Carol: They'll be seeing your understudy if you don't get in out of the cold. Forget this memory of yours and be sensible.

Charlotte: Carol! I'm not cold, and I'll be perfectly able to play tonight, and I am going to stay here for a few minutes longer . . . I must wait . . .

Carol: Wait? For what? Charlotte, what is all of this?

Charlotte: Sit down, Carol, and I'll tell you.

Carol: Very well, my dear, but let's not be very long . . .

Charlotte: There isn't much to it really, but it's so very . . . very important to me. I . . . I suppose you'll laugh rather heartily. It may even sound a little silly and school-girlish . . . but . . .

Carol: Well, for heaven's sake, let's have it!

Charlotte: Once, Carol, I . . . I . . . I fell in love! Can you believe it? It wasn't a silly flirtation . . . it wasn't the Vance-Charlotte kind of convenient arrangement between actress and director . . . but it was . . . it was the real thing . . . I was deeply, completely in love. We were awfully young, nineteen and twenty, but it was so real . . .

Carol: What happened? Why didn't you marry him?

Charlotte: Why? Because I was going to be an actress and because his father had died and David had to support his family. I would have been miserable just being married to a reporter on the home town newspaper.

Carol: You certainly would have.

Charlotte: And so . . . one day . . . our last one in college together we came up here to say good-bye.

Carol: Why this particular place?

Charlotte: Because this was *our* hilltop. We used to walk up here almost every afternoon and watch the sunset together. It . . . it was

here that we dreamed all our beautiful dreams of our future together . . . that is . . . all but the ones that really came true.

Carol: Doesn't it always happen that way?

Charlotte: Maybe, but you somehow never think it will happen to you, but it . . . it did. And so when I finally decided that I had to have a career and we had to say goodbye we . . . we just naturally came up here.

Carol: So therein lies the significance of this spot, eh?

Charlotte: All of this sounds melodramatic I know. It's just the same old story-book struggle of love versus career, but it was so real, so tragically real when it was happening. I was so in love with him and so in love with my career . . . I . . . I couldn't stay in this little town and just teach drama in this little college . . .

Carol: [*Laughing*] That would have been rich!!

Charlotte: I just didn't see that love and career could go together. I wept and David pleaded, but I knew I had to be an actress, and so . . . so we said good-bye.

Carol: And then . . .

Charlotte: He wished me success, and I managed to smile and tell him to look me up if he ever got up to New York.

Carol: Did he?

Charlotte: No! But . . . I haven't finished.

Carol: What else?

Charlotte: David suggested, somewhat sarcastically . . . that . . . that we ought to meet here again in ten years, to see if I still felt that my career was more important than our love.

Carol: Well, that is a dramatic tryst!

Charlotte: We agreed that we would meet here exactly ten years from that afternoon . . . and then . . . then to seal the agreement he . . . he kissed me. Oh Carol, for a moment I wanted to say, "To heck with my career and your family—I love you, David. Don't let me go." . . . but instead I just said, "Goodbye, David . . . see you ten years from today." And then . . . then he walked away . . . down that path and . . . and that's the last I ever saw of David Sanders.

Carol: And thus endeth the story of young love, eh?

Charlotte: Tragic little tale, isn't it? The real tragedy though, is that I am still in the same boat . . . I . . . I've been successful and . . . and very happy . . . oh, so very happy these ten years, but there's always . . . always been something lacking. I'm . . . I'm still in love with David Sanders!

Carol: How can you be when you haven't seen him for so long?

Charlotte: I don't know! I don't know! I . . . I suppose it's just the dream of him that I'm still in love with.

Carol: Well, don't be fool enough to be walking around in love with a dream when you could be married to Vance . . . and he's not such a bad catch, by the way.

Charlotte: Oh, Carol, I've tried . . . honestly tried to say "yes" to Vance, but something . . . Lord knows what, stops me every time.

Carol: [*Sarcastically*] Fate, m a y b e ! But someday I tell you, you're going to find yourself with just a dream to love when Vance loses patience and marries that cute little ingenue who's been making a fool of herself over him.

Charlotte: Oh, if . . . if I could only see him again! If he'd only come today as he promised!

Carol: Come today? Well, I am the dull one! So this is the day ten years from the farewell?

Charlotte: Yes, this is the day, the time and the place . . . Just the hero is needed to complete the picture.

Carol: So, that's why you fought so hard to play near here on this day. Vance thought it was just to see the old school again.

Charlotte: Oh, Carol, don't tell him about this . . . please! Even if he doesn't get mad he'll think it's terribly silly. Please promise you won't tell him!

Carol: All right, my dear, I promise; but just suppose this David does come. How will you explain that?

Charlotte: If he does come? Oh, he won't even remember the date! Or maybe he's married and his wife won't hear to his coming or else . . . [*laughing*] or else she'll come along to protect him!

Carol: Oh! Wouldn't that be a riot! Old flame . . . now Broadway star—and wife . . .

now victim of dishpan hands . . . meet to choose weapons!!

Charlotte: [*Still laughing but with a suggestion of a tear behind it.*] No, this is the way it will happen. He was quite the romantic type; so he'll come, if he remembers. He'll come dashing up and make love to me; but he'll be very fat and commonplace; and he'll still be editor of the home town News. And then . . . then I'll be very disgusted, lose all faith in human nature, forget my youthful passion and dash back to marry Vance.

Carol: Speaking of Vance . . . he's going to be very unhappy if you don't hurry back this minute; and really, my dear, I think you've waited about long enough for this dream of yours.

Charlotte: You're right, of course. There's no sense in waiting any longer. I'll . . . I'll go back to Vance and . . . and somehow I'll make myself say yes. Wish I could make myself remember that it isn't vogue to really be in love with one's husband anyway . . . Well, one last look around and then . . . then . . . Carol! Carol! Did you hear a car stop at the foot of the hill? . . . Did you?

Carol: It's Vance probably. He must really be getting impatient.

Charlotte: Oh yes, of course. I'll . . . I'll say yes to him right now and . . . and right here just to show you I can forget my dreams. But no. No! It couldn't be Vance! He doesn't know the back road! He'd come the other way! Oh Carol!! Carol! It's really going to happen to me! It's going to be . . . but it can't . . . Oh, he couldn't have remembered, he couldn't!! But maybe . . . maybe there's a chance . . . It could be, couldn't it? Oh Carol, please . . . please run down the other path quickly. I must be alone when he comes!

Carol: Charlotte, I think you're acting like a child. It's probably some college couple romancing. But I'll go just the same. Now . . . hurry along.

Charlotte: I . . . I will—but hurry . . . I hear someone coming!

[*Carol exits*]

Oh, please, God, let it be David . . . But Carol's right of course. It will be some college

couple romancing. I . . . I'd better go. He . . . he couldn't really come. Fate just couldn't be that kind to me!

[*She turns to go out stage right as David Sanders enters stage left. He stands watching her for a few moments and then calls to her softly.*]

David: Charlotte?

Charlotte: David!!

David: [*Taking both her hands in his*] Charlotte! You're here!

Charlotte: It's . . . it's you! No! I . . . I can't believe it!

David: But it's true . . . I am here!

Charlotte: You . . . you did remember! You . . . you did come! Oh, David, bless you for coming.

David: Were you really afraid I wouldn't come?

Charlotte: I guess my faith in human nature was at a pretty low ebb, David, I was terribly, terribly afraid, but now . . . now you're here!!

David: Yes, Charlotte . . . we're . . . we're together again after ten long years.

Charlotte: Ten years . . . so much has happened in those years.

David: Yes . . . and they have actually made you more beautiful than you were, Charlotte.

Charlotte: Have they, David?

David: Indeed they have, my dear, and I . . . I distinctly remember thinking that such a thing would be quite impossible.

Charlotte: My very best bow to you, sir . . . and may I add that the years have been most kind to you. [*Laughing*] You . . . you haven't gotten fat and commonplace at all. You're really quite distinguished!

David: An excellent speech, madam. We must add that to the long list of your accomplishments.

Charlotte: My accomplishments?

David: Of course. I've kept up with you pretty well for the last six or seven years.

Charlotte: Have you really? You mean you got a microscope to find the notices I was getting seven years ago?

David: I'll have to admit it was a little hard to find you then, but for the last four it would

have been hard not to see your name or picture everywhere.

Charlotte: I suppose I am pretty well on the way to having all I want . . . that is, as . . . as far as a career is concerned . . . David?

David: Yes?

Charlotte: Oh nothing . . . er, tell me all about yourself . . . Are you . . . are you married?

David: No, Charlotte, I'm not married.

Charlotte: Oh, I'm glad!

David: Glad?

Charlotte: [*Embarrassed*] Well, I mean . . . I'm . . . Well, I'm just glad . . . that's all. But tell me about the home town paper.

David: Well, I really haven't kept up with it since I've been editor of the city paper.

Charlotte: The *Times*?

David: Yes, I've been there for about six years now, and I've been editor for the last two.

Charlotte: Oh, David, it . . . it couldn't have been you who . . . who called me yesterday and asked for an interview this afternoon . . . !?

David: Of course it was. I had to be sure you were planning to come up here this afternoon. I couldn't leave a busy job like mine and drive up here for nothing, could I?

Charlotte: Oh, Davy, why didn't I guess . . . but . . . but suppose I'd granted your request for an interview?

David: I think I would have sent a substitute and . . . and then promptly lost all faith in human nature.

Charlotte: David! You're . . . you're more the romanticist than I am! Then . . . then you've been right there in the city since we came and you . . . you waited for our tryst up here?

David: What's one more day when you've waited ten years . . .

Charlotte: If . . . if this wern't really happening to me I wouldn't believe it. It sounds like a fairy tale or . . . or a play. I'd love to do a play about us! All I need is my own private playwright. Oh David, have you read the play I'm touring with now?

David: Why, er . . . yes . . . yes, I know the play.

Charlotte: How do you like it?

David: Why . . . er . . . I . . . I like it.

Charlotte: It isn't, of course, the most well-written play I've ever done . . .

David: No?

Charlotte: No, but there is something about it . . . perhaps the tragic note in the love story . . . that . . . that appeals to me more than any play I know.

David: So you still like tragedy, eh?

Charlotte: Yes. Guess I always will. But really, David, I had the strangest feeling when I first read that play . . . that . . . that the play was . . . I can't define it exactly . . . but I felt that the play was written for me.

David: Perhaps it was.

Charlotte: I've never felt exactly this way about a play before. It's almost as if the playwright knew all about me and just the play I wanted and . . . and wrote it just for me.

David: Yes, I thought it was like you when I read it . . . Do you know who wrote it?

Charlotte: Well, the thing that is really strangest about it is that we *don't know who* wrote it!

David: What?

Charlotte: It's amazing that an author whose play is having such a success would keep his real name secret and use only a pen name.

David: That is strange, but maybe he'll turn up soon with an even better play for you.

Charlotte: [*Laughing*] Maybe you could help us find him. Maybe you would put an ad in your paper.

David: Well, that might not work but I think I can help . . .

Charlotte: Really? How?

David: There's a story about that author that might help you find him . . . I'll tell you but you must promise not to interrupt until I finish.

Charlotte: All right, I promise.

David: Very well . . . now once upon a time, a boy and a girl were very much in love but something . . . let's call it fate for lack of a better name . . . kept them from being married. This fate gave them separate paths to travel, and so they parted.

Charlotte: What else could we have done . . . then?

David: You catch on too quickly; and, besides, you promised not to interrupt.

Charlotte: I'm sorry.

David: The girl has almost reached her goal. She's become a very famous actress, but somehow she's stayed the *same* and hasn't tried to become a glamour queen despite the fact that she is very beautiful. . .

Charlotte: Am I, David?

David: Yes! And most important of all, she hasn't married anyone else. The boy was so much in love with her . . . and still is . . . that he determined to be successful first in the newspaper world and then as a . . . playwright.

Charlotte: A playwright! David! Did you . . . ?

David: He worked hard, but most of his plays were turned down. Then one day he saw his college sweetheart in a Broadway show and got the inspiration to write a really good play . . . for her.

Charlotte: You were in New York?

David: There you go again! So I wrote the play, and it sold, and then—miracle of miracles . . . it was produced on Broadway . . . Oh, this has all been too fantastic. It can't really have happened! I suppose fate decided it was time to give me a break! Now my play is on

the road, and the leading lady is Miss Charlotte Michel, whom I believe I have the honor of addressing, have I not?

Charlotte: Oh David! You awful creature! You . . . you angel! I can't decide whether to slap you . . . or . . . or kiss you!

David: Let me decide that!

Charlotte: I hate you for making me wait all this time, and I . . . I adore you for . . . for just being the same old David . . . and most of all I . . . I love you for loving me enough to . . . to do all this and wait so long for me . . .

David: How much longer do I have to wait?

Charlotte: First I . . . I have to explain a few things to a few people down there [*Points off stage right*] in car, and then I have to drive in to the city and give the best performance of my life to the most important audience of my life, and then . . . then David?

David: Yes, darling?

Charlotte: After than . . . oh immediately after that . . . will you . . . will you marry me?

David: Try to stop me!

[*She holds him off no longer and they embrace as*]

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

—SALLY VEATCH

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BITTER SWEET

*Mad House Marge wore filmy hose of silk;
Bathed her face in creamy beauty milk;
Brushed her teeth to look like pearls—
Combed and twisted all her curls;
Used with vigor her atomizer;
To add the sweetest appetizer.
She stung her eyes with black mascara,
Curled her lashes like Miss O'Hara.
She thought her breath would fairly curdle
As she squirmed in her pre-war girdle.
Her excitement almost laid her prone
As she ran to get the inside phone.*

*The reason for so much adorning
Was the big wolf she'd met that morning.
He charmed the lass in the smoothest way
While she flapped her blue eyes at her prey.
A man on hand is worth two in camp
And meant the world to this mad house vamp.
She pursued this handsome man with zeal
To assure success and clinch the deal,
She saw that far away look at last
And she thought the hard part now well past,
But the look of love was not for her
For far-away loves he did prefer.
In the moment she judged as success
The man failed to see her grand finesse
And showed her a picture of wife and child.
On sight Mad House Marge went raving wild.
Her eyes rolled back in her whirling head
And she wished she had stayed home instead.
She wheeled and left the blasted stinker
To resume her role as cynic thinker.*

—MARGY RAGAN

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